

palms upward, as one should never sit,  
and she would not be Sheila unless

she had two canvas bags stuffed with sheet  
music, two recorders for duets,

and artist's pads in case we will sketch.  
We were raised at the same address,

but I clambered up counterclockwise,  
like bindweed, while she grew up like vetch

around life's long palings. I revise  
my sympathy; I will not presume

that her life would have been mine except  
for those small things I could itemize

(and started to). A fragile perfume  
issues from where her soul has been kept:

they are poems written on goldenrod  
foolscap somewhere in an upper room.

#### A WALK IN TAKASHIMADAIIRA

-- to Teruo

This is your country  
and you have to live in it,  
yet you clearly seized my hand in bold daylight,  
in the clamor of the street,  
and held on to it through three red-lights, across  
the railroad bridge, past the bicycle shop, right

to your apartment door.  
As we broadsided a fleet  
of teen-age boys, you must have felt my hand fight  
your grasp, because you quickened  
your fingers like the tines of a cage around  
a fitful bird, quenching there its fit for flight,

and we sedately  
erased their loafing glances.  
Suddenly I am sailing through the skylight  
of André Masson's ceiling  
and the world's hateful gray has been blown away  
beneath marblings of azure and crocoite,

gold and cinnabar.  
Now I might be Pepito  
in love with Miss Ruiz, floating on a bright



cloud of Xochimilco flowers,  
cloying as the topping from a birthday cake.  
Only your anchor hand stops my heart, that kite,

from bursting its frame,  
so buoyed is it -- a comic  
strip balloon filled with exclamation points, light  
warm and waxen and birthday-candle brazen  
flows down from my heart and makes our hands unite.

-- Roger Finch

Tokyo, Japan

#### SAME DAY DEVELOPING

Due to problems in the darkroom, the place that promised "same day developing" was unable to develop my pictures the same day. I had to go back the next day. They were very sorry about the inconvenience. I sipped complimentary coffee and looked at lenses in a velvet display case (just as I had the previous day). Then I heard that dreaded voice from the darkroom: "We've got problems...." The identical problems. Already I could see the same day developing in that place.

#### OLIVER

I'm walking behind a man in a blue turban. This is the diamond district. Obviously, if the diamonds are anywhere, they are hidden in his turban. He keeps touching it. It is pinned from the inside. Now someone comes out of a coffee shop and almost knocks him over. Instinctively his hands fly up to make sure the turban is still secure. He glances this way and that, hoping he hasn't attracted too much attention. As he hurries across the block I see his reflection in a store window. He has olive skin. It's exactly five shades darker than an olive.